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C O N F I D E N T I A L BRATISLAVA 000187

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [SR](#) [YI](#) [KO](#) [UNSC](#) [LO](#)
SUBJECT: HEATED PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE OVER KOSOVO CONTINUES;
FM KUBIS SAYS HE STILL HAS A MANDATE TO DO THE RIGHT THING

Classified By: DCM Lawrence R. Silverman, for reasons 1.4 b and d.

¶1. (C) Summary: While the MFA issued a statement March 27 emphasizing EU unity and support for the Contact Group on a Kosovo final status UNSCR based on the Ahtisaari plan, politicians took to the floor in parliament with a string of diatribes against the prospect of an independent Kosovo without Serb agreement. Coalition leaders on March 26 agreed to a new resolution text that included negative rhetoric, but FM Kubis sent us a clear message that he would retain his mandate to stay within the EU. That said, as of COB, FM Kubis, disturbed at the tenor of the parliamentary debate, had gone to parliament to participate. The debate was expected to continue into the night, with a vote the morning of March 28. We are told the coalition's non-binding resolution will prevail, but offer no guarantees. End summary.

Coalition Agrees to Support Common Resolution

¶2. (U) Coalition party leaders PM Robert Fico (Smer), Jan Slota (Slovak National Party--SNS), and Vladimir Meciar (Movement for a Democratic Slovakia--HZDS) met at Meciar's private villa March 26 to hammer out agreements on Kosovo, the new labor law, and support for Economy Minister Lubomir Jahodatek (whom the opposition would like to recall). On Kosovo, the coalition partners agreed to a new draft text for a parliamentary declaration, which met the needs of the nationalists to express displeasure with the prospect of Kosovo independence, while at the same time emphasizing that the GOS should follow the common EU line (text in para 3). The negative preambular language was due in part to Meciar's unhelpful stance. He reportedly opened the Coalition Council meeting by telling Fico he intended to vote for the harsher SNS resolution. (Comment: This is contrary to HZDS contacts' claims that the party would be largely on the right side of this issue. End comment)

¶3. (U) Begin Informal Translation of the Text:

DECLARATION OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC ON
RESOLVING THE FUTURE STATUS OF THE SERBIAN PROVINCE OF KOSOVO

The National Council of the Slovak Republic

Expresses the belief

that a full and unlimited independence of the Kosovo province
is not in the interest of stability of the region that was
exposed to tragedies and crises for the past long years;

that not all options have been exhausted for a dialogue
leading to an agreement;

that resolving the future status of the Kosovo province must be based on respect for the UN Charter and other international legal norms;

that the future status of Kosovo will not set a precedent in international law;

Expects

that the Government of the Slovak Republic will seek a joint solution for the future of the Western Balkans together with other EU member states and with a clear perspective for integrating the countries of the Western Balkans into the European Union;

Recalls

the decisions of the Slovak Government in 1999 that contributed to destabilizing the Western Balkans region;

Is convinced

that this statement, reflecting the will of the National Council of the Slovak Republic, will contribute to stabilizing the situation in the given region.

End Text.

¶4. (C) We made clear to our contacts that even though it was preambular language, sentiment that the negotiations route had not been exhausted was unhelpful. Speaker of Parliament Pavol Paska (Smer), Chair of Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee Boris Zala (Smer), and Chair of Parliament's European Affairs Committee Milan Urbani (HZDS) all assured the Ambassador, DCM, and poloffs 3/27 that the resolution was

a political compromise which meant nothing. It would be passed and forgotten the next day, and the government would have free rein to act in the EU and UNSC. Knowing that the DCM had a breakfast meeting 3/27 with his chief advisor Vladimir Faic, PM Fico gave Faic instructions to reassure us that the resolution would not pose any problem to Slovakia following the EU consensus position in Brussels and New York.

Zala told us he had included the language critical of "full and unlimited" to counter harsher language categorically opposing the breakup of any European state. He claimed he tried to stay close to language Ahtisaari had used so the GOS would be able to support the kind of independence Ahtisaari was advocating.

¶5. (C) SNS withdrew both its original draft resolution and the resolution it worked up with opposition parties SDKU and KDH. Smer substituted the new coalition language for its original draft. The debate in the plenary session began after lunch. It was full of hot rhetoric from Slota and other SNS MPs, former PM and opposition leader Mikulas Dzurinda (defending his SDKU party's resolution), and several Christian Democrat (KDH) MPs. As of COB, the debate was ongoing. Angry at the tenor of the debate, FM Kubis went to parliament late this afternoon to observe/participate. His chef de cabinet told us they expected the debate to continue late into the evening, and that the MPs would vote on the various resolutions on March 28.

MFA Sticks to Its Line of Support for Ahtisaari

¶6. (C) FM Jan Kubis informed us through his chef de cabinet that he had consulted with PM Fico on the coalition resolution language prior to the coalition's acceptance and that the PM had assured him it would not in any way alter Kubis's mandate on this issue or his authority regarding the vote at the UNSC. The operative language, saying what parliament "expected," said that Slovakia in effect had to coordinate with its EU partners. This was meant to signal that the most important part of the resolution left Kubis's hands free to go along with the EU. Ambassador is expecting to meet with Kubis March 28.

17. (U) Meanwhile, despite the impending debate in parliament, the MFA released a statement early March 27 expressing that during the UNSC debate on the Ahtisaari plan, Slovakia would seek a solution that led to peace and security and emphasized the European perspective of the Balkans region. Slovakia would support all suggestions that would lead to a mutually agreeable, friendly solution. Slovakia would also emphasize that any UNSCR would not set a precedent. The MFA expressed full support for the direction and role of the Contact Group, and called for continued unity as the matter proceeded through the UNSC. The MFA also emphasized EU unity within the UNSC, and vowed to fulfill its role responsibly as a member of the EU, NATO, and UNSC.

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